

Victim's Rights Group Announces Campaign Kickoff

Law enforcement officials and advocates on Wednesday announced the official kickoff of a statewide campaign to enshrine new requirements for the treatment of crime victims into the Ohio Constitution.

Supporters of the so-called Marsy's Law, named after a murder victim who died in 1983 and patterned after similar laws in other states, appeared at a Statehouse news conference and urged support for the changes, which if the coalition is successful would appear on the Nov. 7 ballot.

The Marsy's Law for Ohio amendment would mandate that crime victims: Receive notification of all legal proceedings; are provided the opportunity to be heard during the various steps of the process, such as parole hearings; are allowed to give input on plea deals; and are provided restitution resulting from the financial impact of the crime.

"By placing guarantees into the Ohio Constitution that a victim's rights will be protected, Marsy's Law for Ohio will be another important tool for prosecutors in the battle to help crime victims," longtime Franklin County Prosecutor Ron O'Brien said in a statement.

While the state's constitution already includes some protections for crime victims, supporters of the amendment say they don't go far enough.

"The rights of crime victims are too important to be allowed to fall through the cracks in the criminal justice system," Franklin County Sheriff Dallas Baldwin said. "I have long believed that the rights of crime victims should be respected just as much as the rights of the accused. Marsy's Law for Ohio is a much-needed change to Ohio's constitution."

Also appearing at Wednesday's event were representatives of crime victim advocacy groups and survivors of violent crimes.

"My rights as a victim in the domestic violence case against my husband were routinely violated and no one in the system seemed to care," crime victim Danielle Morlan said. "Marsy's Law for Ohio will change that and give crime victims the ability to protect and enforce their rights."

The campaign committee was cleared to begin collecting signatures last week when the Ohio Ballot Board agreed the proposal constituted a single issue. (See Gongwer Ohio Report, February 8, 2017)

Supporters have until July 5 to gather 305,591 valid signatures and meet other requirements to qualify for the fall ballot.

Lawmaker: CAUV Formula A 'Major Butt-Kicker' For Farmers

Sen. Cliff Hite (R-Findlay) on Wednesday renewed his effort to overhaul the Current Agricultural Use Value tax formula in testimony before the Senate Ways & Means Committee.

The proposal he outlined (SB 36) is identical to his prior bill on the subject (SB246, 131st General Assembly), he said. But he's hoping this year's bill will fare better than the last, which received six hearings in the Senate but failed to advance beyond committee.

"I understand the angst. I'm sure the Department of Taxation is going to pull their hair out," Sen. Hite said. "We've been thinking about this and talking about this for a long time. It's time to do something. It's time to give relief to these farmers."

Farmer groups for their part have already vowed to "carry the CAUV fairness fight into 2017." They say the formula that has worked fine for decades has become skewed and is driving up their tax burdens, threatening to force them out of the profession. (See Gongwer Ohio Report, December 20, 2016)

Opponents, including statewide school groups, have previously opposed the change out of concerns it will negatively impact school funding.

Predicting that those concerns will return before the committee in testimony this session, Sen. Hite urged lawmakers to put themselves in the position of farmers.

"If any of you were doing your taxes this time of year and you discovered your taxes were going to go up 300% you would freak out, especially if you're on a fixed income, especially if you're a brand new, let's say, farmer trying to get started," he said."

The bill would prohibit the use of certain nonagricultural factors in the valuation of farmland, which the sponsor said would improve the accuracy of the formula.

"Including these assumptions has no bearing upon the land's capability to produce agricultural income, which is the sole purpose of the CAUV formula," he said. "These factors arbitrarily inflate the value of farmland based on market considerations and do not in any way account for how much income is achieved."

The bill would also remove disincentives to engage in conservation practices, which he said undermines the formula's original intent to preserve land.

"If I don't have an incentive to keep my woodlands, I'm going to plow them down and make more money," Sen. Hite said. Although that is currently happening, he said, it's not yet occurring on a large scale.

He acknowledged that the taxation percentage for some farmers is currently going down, but asked lawmakers to keep that in perspective.

"To me going from (a) 350% (increase) to 310% is going down but, in layman Coach Hite language, it's a major butt-kicker anyway," he said. "It's not even apples and oranges. It's like apples and squirrels."

In response to questions, Sen. Hite committed to providing specific numbers on several aspects of the issue to senators moving forward. Among the unanswered questions was how the CAUV applies to urban farmers.

Sen. Hite did express support for an idea from Sen. Louis Terhar (R-Cincinnati) to implement a "collar" on the formula so that the taxes owed in any one year could not rise above or drop below specific levels.

"But there's a caveat," Sen. Hite replied. "The formula from the '70s has the capacity to also go down and so if you change that formula the chances of going way down would be eliminated with the (collar). I don't know what is better."

Sen. Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering) requested more detail on woodland preservation regarding the CAUV. Sen. Hite replied that the woodland in question is typically small and serves as a wind or snow buffer. Under the current formula, however, farmers stand to gain money from clearing that land to free up new farmland, he said.

Sen. Bob Hackett (R-London) agreed that something must be done. He criticized a time lag present in the formula in which farms going through tough times are still paying taxes for healthy years from 2012 and 2013. Meanwhile, he said, the industry is struggling with historically low interest rates and simultaneously high crop prices.

"We just have to update the rules and make them fit the times," Sen. Hackett said.

Sen. Bob Peterson (R-Sabina) agreed the historically low capitalization rates have "skewed the formula" and forced land values to be higher than they should be.

Predicting a robust discussion on the issue as the bill moves forward, Sen. Hite requested committee members keep in mind the importance agriculture plays in Ohio's economy. Potential farmers are being deterred from entering the profession, he said.

"We can't allow that to happen when it's our number one industry in the state of Ohio," he said. "This is a change to make sure we preserve that."

Insurers, Regulators Eyeing DC For Health Policy Changes

State insurance regulators and the health insurance industry are closely monitoring the federal debate over the future of the Affordable Care Act to determine the impact that changes could have on Ohio consumers and the marketplace, stakeholders told a House panel on Wednesday.

Jillian Froment, deputy director of the Ohio Department of Insurance, and Miranda Motter, president and CEO of the Ohio Association of Health Plans, both said changes could have a far-reaching impact on the Ohio market.

Ms. Froment told the House Insurance Committee that the full impact of any federal changes won't be known until a final product is in place.

She said, however, that insurers will be filing their 2018 rates and policies within the next two months. "We are incredibly concerned about what this looks like for Ohio," she said.

Ms. Froment noted that those filings will be based on current law. If there are changes, ODI will have to be flexible to accommodate for adjustments.

"At this point, they're looking for clarity," she said of insurers. "And that's what the department's looking for."

Ms. Motter said federal changes could either bring stability or volatility to insurance markets.

The federal law, she said, did little to address health care costs, and said efforts should be made to identify key cost drivers - including medical service rates and prescription costs. Further, she said OAHP wants to increase transparency so Ohioans have more information about the cost of the medical services they are obtaining.

Other key cost-related issues, she said, are state and federal mandates, taxes and fees.

ODI: In an introductory presentation, Ms. Froment told the panel the agency regulates insurers and agents across Ohio, and is pleased that Ohio is home to a robust insurance industry. The agency's goal is to assure consumer protection while promoting a stable and competitive environment.

She said Ohio is the sixth-largest state by premium volume, and represents the world's 17th-largest insurance market.

She told Rep. Michael Henne (R-Clayton) that the use of data analytics is at the center of the rate-setting process. Rates, she said, need to be tied to the risk of loss or expense.

Rep. Andy Brenner (R-Powell) asked how the department will be reviewing auto insurance rates with the expected increase in the use of automated vehicles.

Ms. Froment said that will be a big issue in the future, adding the agency expects the industry to come to an agreement the same way insurance issues were addressed with ride-sharing services like Uber.

Discussions on that front are ongoing with large auto insurers, she said. "We're seeing them come to the table with some really good ideas."

OAHP: Ms. Motter said her members want to promote quality care and affordable coverage.

She said 52% of Ohioans receive their coverage through employer-sponsored plans, and a majority of those employer plans are self-insured. That means local business leaders are often the ones determining the scope of coverage for the majority of Ohioans.

A key issue for insurers is the cost of health services, Ms. Motter said. "If health care is expensive, health insurance is expensive," she said.

Ms. Motter also said lawmakers can take another step to address Ohio's opioid problem by limiting the availability of medication that can be addictive. She said OAHP backs federal recommendations to reduce the number of pills that are issued to treat certain conditions.

She also told Rep. Wes Retherford (R-Middletown) that the group opposes budget language that would eliminate transparency reforms that were included in the previous budget bill.

Rep. John Bocchieri (D-Alliance) raised questions about the importance of having health insurance coverage be portable, given new research indicating that many young people will change jobs many times over their lives. Ms. Motter said that is an issue that can be discussed among member plans.

OII, AOLIC: Dean Fadel of the Ohio Insurance Institute and Greg Lestini, representing the Association of Ohio Life Insurance Companies, also briefed the committee on the role and scope of their members' industries.

Mr. Fadel said there are 972 property and casualty companies licensed to do business in Ohio, and strong competition helps keep the state's average rates well below national averages.

The state's average auto insurance rate is the 12th lowest, while the average homeowner's insurance rate is 30% less than the national average, he said.

He said the industry is a key economic driver, accounting for a significant number of employees and economic activity.

Mr. Fadel said the industry is pleased that a number of educational institutions have added insurance-related programs and certificates, saying that training is important to the industry's future in Ohio.

Mr. Lestini also said Ohio is fortunate to have some of the lowest-cost life insurance options available.

He said 40 life insurers are domiciled in the state, and all insurers have six million policies valued at \$960 billion in place. Life insurance companies also make other contributions to the state by investing in mortgages and owning property, he said.

Mr. Lestini said Ohio is known as a stable state in terms of regulation, and it is important that the premium tax the industry pays is preserved. He also cautioned lawmakers against imposing new taxes on out-of-state insurers, saying the threat of retaliatory taxes could create issues for Ohio companies that sell policies elsewhere.

Subscribers Note: The presentations are available on the committee's website under Feb. 15.

Survey Shows Restaurant Owners Optimistic; Cedar Fair Has Record Fiscal Year; Diebold, DDR Report Financials

Restaurant owners and operators entered the new year with optimism after a strong finish to 2016, according to Ohio Restaurant Association survey results.

Restaurateurs in the state told ORA that they're planning for a 4% same-store sales increase in 2017 after experiencing an average 3% sales increase across the industry last year.

"The Ohio restaurant scene is dynamic with growth opportunities for concepts with outstanding brand positioning, great food, A+ guest service and flexible models that offer many customer touch points such as mobile ordering and delivery," ORA President and CEO John Barker said in a statement.

"Same-stores sales in Ohio during the fourth quarter were positive for our industry, up more than 3% as we experienced mild weather and strong traffic around the holidays," he added. "Growth slowed in January, but owners are bullish about the year due to strong consumer confidence and a soaring stock market."

About 80 restaurateurs throughout the state with an average of 2.5 restaurants and revenue per company of about \$5.7 million replied to the survey, which also asked about food delivery utilization, food delivery impact, off-premise occasions, and food and labor cost outlooks.

Cedar Fair: The Sandusky-based theme park company continued to break records in 2016, ending the year with \$1.29 billion in revenues.

It reported the revenues, which were up 4% from 2015, along with net income, that came in at \$178 million, or \$3.14 per diluted limited partner unit.

The increases go hand-in-hand with others, including a 3% jump in attendance to 25.1 million guests last year, the company said. Average in-park spending also increased 2% to a record \$46.90 per guest.

Out-of-park spending also hit record numbers, coming in at \$146 million - a 6% increase from 2015. Cedar Fair attributed those revenues in part to higher occupancy rates and average daily room rates at the company's resort properties.

"We credit this achievement to our unique regional brands and the positive responses we have received for our special events programming and immersive entertainment offerings," CEO Matt Ouimet said. "These individual park brands allow us to provide our guests an experience unmatched by other generic amusement parks. This in turn has resulted in strong guest loyalty within the regions we operate and decades of record growth across all revenue channels."

Based on the year-end earnings report, the company said it's confident it will achieve its long-term growth goal of \$500 million in Adjusted EBITDA by the end of 2017, which is a year earlier than planned.

Diebold Nixdorf: The company reported fourth-quarter revenue of \$1.2 billion - an increase of nearly 104% over last year as a result of the acquisition of Wincor Nixdorf.

Full-year revenue also increased 37.1% to \$3.3 billion compared to 2015, the company said. It cautioned, however, that comparisons to previous periods are materially affected by the August acquisition.

DDR: The Beachwood company posted fourth quarter net income attributable to common shareholders of \$28.1 million, or \$0.08 per diluted share

For its full fiscal year ended Dec. 31, it reported net income of \$37.6 million, or \$0.10 per diluted share. That's an improvement over last year, when it saw a net loss of \$94.5 million, or \$0.27 per diluted share.

Supplemental Agency Calendar

Thursday, February 16

~~Canceled: Real Estate Appraiser Board, 77 South High Street, 22nd Floor, Columbus, 9:30 a.m.~~

Wednesday, February 22

Racing Commission, 77 S. High St., Rm. 1960, Columbus, 10 a.m.

State Personnel Board of Review, 65 E. State St., 12th Fl., Columbus, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, March 22

State Personnel Board of Review, 65 E. State St., 12th Fl., Columbus, 10 a.m.

Supplemental Event Planner

Wednesday, February 22

**Ohio Farm Bureau Ag Day at the Capital, Sheraton Columbus Hotel, 75 State Street, Columbus
Tuesday, March 21**

**Ohio Craft Brewers Association legislative reception, Wolf's Ridge Brewing, 215 N. 4th St.,
Columbus, 5 p.m.**

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Scott Miller, President | Kent Cahlander, Editor | Melissa Dilley, Mike Livingston, Dustin
Ensinger, Jon Reed, Staff Writers

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Daily Activity Planner for Thursday, February 16

Legislative Committees

House Finance: State Government & Agency Review Sub. (Chr. Faber, K., 466-6344), Rm. 121, 9 a.m.

- Budget testimony from Optical Dispensers Board, Optometry Board, Dietetics Board, and Public Testimony.

House State & Local Government (Committee Record) (Chr. Anielski, M., 644-6041), Rm. 116, 9 a.m.

HB 5 **MICROBUSINESSES** (Pelanda, D., Gavarone, T.) To create a statutory definition of "microbusiness." (2nd Hearing-All testimony)

HB 12 **OFFICIAL STATE STRUCTURE** (Gonzales, A.) To designate the barn as the official historical architectural structure of the state. (2nd Hearing-All testimony)

HB 31 **GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING** (Cupp, R.) To abolish the Government Contracting Advisory Council. (2nd Hearing-All testimony)

HB 34 **PUBLIC NOTICES** (Hambley, S., Ryan, S.) To authorize certain state agencies, local governments, and other boards, commissions, and officers to deliver certain notices by ordinary mail and electronically instead of by certified mail. (2nd Hearing-All testimony)

House Finance: Agriculture, Development & Natural Resources Sub. (Chr. Thompson, A., 644-8728), Rm. 018, 9 a.m.

- Budget testimony from OARDC and OSU Extension, Petroleum Underground Storage Tank Release Compensation Board, Environmental Review Appeals Commission and Consumers' Counsel

Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee (Committee Record) (Chr. Huffman, S., 466-7584), Finance Hearing Rm., 9 a.m.

- Expansion Population - Ohio Medicaid Group VIII Assessment by Barbara Sears, Director, Ohio Department of Medicaid

Joint Education Oversight Committee (Committee Record) (Chr. Hite, C., 466-8150), South Hearing Rm., 9:30 a.m.

- Presentation from Superintendent of Public Instruction Paolo DeMaria on Ohio's Draft Accountability Plan for the Federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

House Aging & Long Term Care (Committee Record) (Chr. Arndt, S., 644-6011), Rm. 113, 10 a.m.

- Presentations by the Ohio Department of Aging and Ohio Department of Job & Family Services

House Finance: Higher Education Sub. (Chr. Perales, R., 644-6020), Ohio History Center, 800 E. 17th Ave., Cardinal Classroom, Columbus, 12 p.m.

- Budget testimony from Ohio History Connection, Ohioana Library Board, Ohioana Library Association

Agency Calendar

State Teachers Retirement System, 275 E. Broad St., Columbus, 8 a.m.
School Employees Retirement System, 300 E. Broad St., Columbus, 8:30 a.m.
~~Canceled: Real Estate Appraiser Board, 77 South High Street, 22nd Floor,~~
~~Columbus, 9:30 a.m.~~
Children's Trust Fund, 77 South High Street, 31st Floor, Room East B, Columbus,
10 a.m.
Tuition Trust Authority, 77 S. High St., 31st Fl., West B&C, Columbus, 10 a.m.

Event Planner

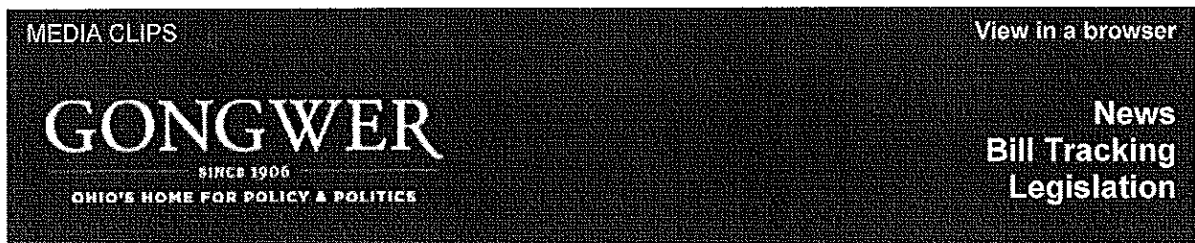
No events scheduled.

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Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 8:22 AM
To: Kasych, Shawn
Subject: Ohio Media Clips, Thursday, February 16



NEWS

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We owe them (Toledo Blade, 2/16/2017)

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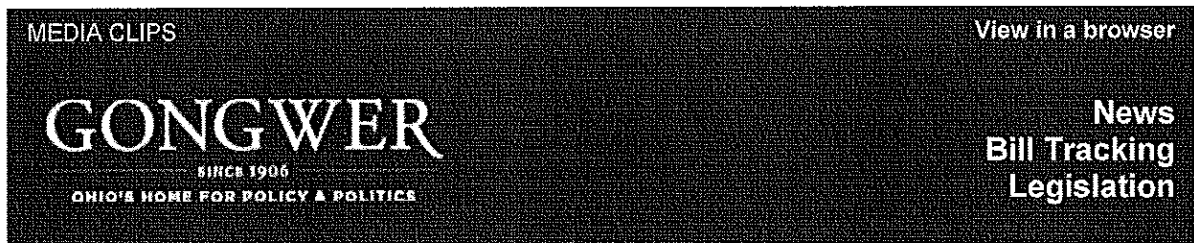
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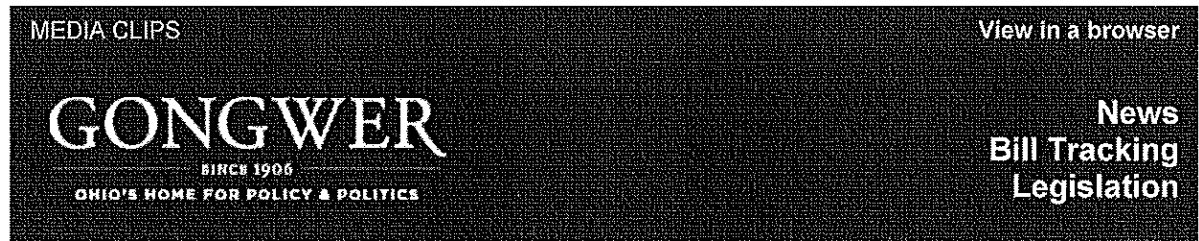
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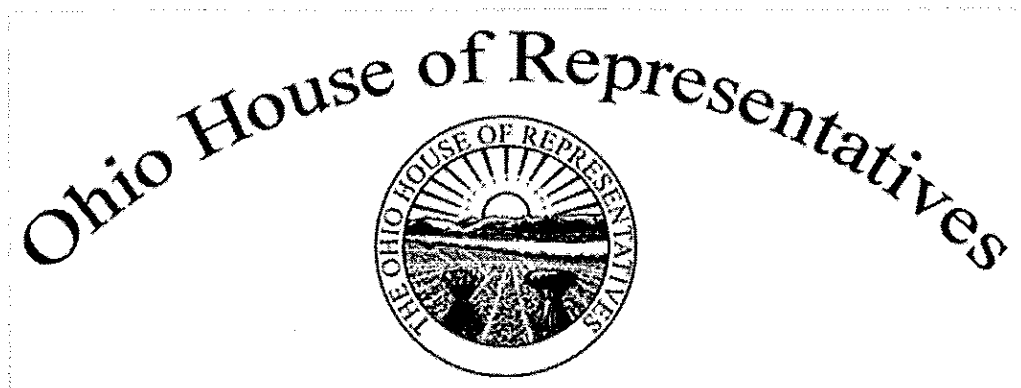
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From: Shamblin, James
Sent: Friday, February 17, 2017 3:02 PM
To: Rep37
CC: Roegner, Kristina
Subject: COMMITTEE NOTICE: The House Committee on Federalism and Interstate Relations



Announcement of Committee Meeting

COMMITTEE: The House Committee on Federalism and Interstate Relations

CHAIR: Kristina D. Roegner
DATE: Tuesday, February 21, 2017
ROOM: Statehouse Room 115
TIME: **4:00 PM**

Committee Agenda:

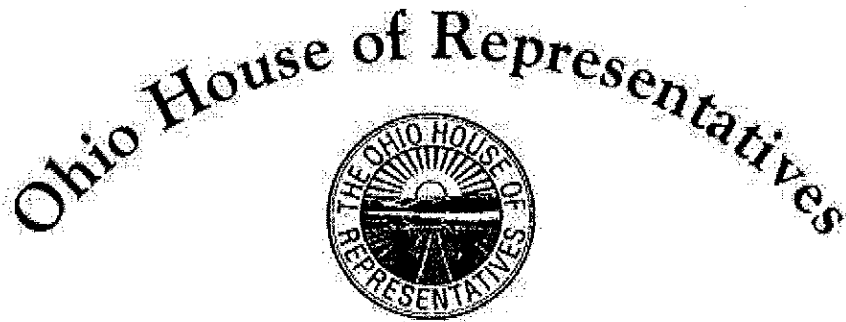
1. Committee and Member Introduction
2. Appointment of Committee Secretary
3. Adoption of Committee Rules
4. Presentation: Introduction and overview of Federalism from Daniel J. Dew of the Buckeye Institute and Peter Shane from The Ohio State University, Moritz College of Law.

The Chair respectfully requests that testifying parties submit testimony to her office

24 hours prior to committee.

Testimony can be submitted to: james.shamblin@ohiohouse.gov

From: Miller, Josh
Sent: Friday, February 17, 2017 4:12 PM
To: Members_All; Staff_All
Subject: Co-sponsor Request: Private Sector Right to Work



Tom Brinkman, Jr.
State Representative, 27th District
MEMORANDUM

To: All House Members
From: Representative Tom Brinkman, Jr.
Date: February 17th, 2017
RE: Private Sector Right to Work

I will soon be introducing Private Sector Right to Work legislation. Our neighboring states of Michigan, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Indiana have passed Right to Work, and it is long overdue here in Ohio.

This important bill will help make Ohio businesses more competitive and prosperous by eliminating forced union dues and memberships. **No one should be forced to pay a union to get or keep a job.**

If you are interested in co-sponsoring please contact my legislative aide Josh Miller at 614-644-6886 or Josh.Miller@ohiohouse.gov by the close of business on March 3rd.

Thank you,

Tom Brinkman, Jr.
Ohio House of Representatives
District 27

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This important bill will help make Ohio businesses more competitive and prosperous by eliminating forced union dues and memberships. **No one should be forced to pay a union to get or keep a job.**

If you are interested in co-sponsoring please contact my legislative aide Josh Miller at 614-644-6886 or Josh.Miller@ohiohouse.gov by the close of business on March 3rd.

Thank you,

Tom Brinkman, Jr.
Ohio House of Representatives
District 27

From: Rep30
Sent: Tuesday, February 21, 2017 2:36 PM
To: Merrin, Derek
CC: Kasych, Shawn; Springhetti, Blake; Myers, Marisa; Faber, Keith; Dumski, Allie
Subject: RE: Sick Day Memos

Representative Merrin,

Thanks for sharing the LSC research memos. One of the most defensible parts of SB 5 was the proposal to eliminate statutory mandate on employee sick leave. Eliminating the mandate would not directly affect collective bargaining, and employees could still bargain for the 15 days. On the other hand, public employers could also bargain for a lesser number of days. A targeted bill limited solely to removing these state mandates would make a great deal of sense.

Regards,

Bill

From: Merrin, Derek
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 9:27 AM
To: Kasych, Shawn <Shawn.Kasych@ohiohouse.gov>; Myers, Marisa <marisa.myers@ohiohouse.gov>; Seitz, Bill <Bill.Seitz@ohiohouse.gov>; Faber, Keith <Keith.Faber@ohiohouse.gov>
Cc: Springhetti, Blake <Blake.Springhetti@ohiohouse.gov>; Wolf, Jimmy <Jimmy.Wolf@ohiohouse.gov>; Dumski, Allie <Allie.Dumski@ohiohouse.gov>
Subject: Sick Day Memos

FYI:

LSC has provided me research regarding state law mandating the number of sick/personal days.

The memos are attached.

All the best,
Derek



Derek Merrin
Ohio House of Representatives
House District 47
Office (614) 466-1731
Derek.Merrin@ohiohouse.gov
77 S. High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

From: Westlake, Libby
Sent: Friday, February 24, 2017 8:25 AM
To: Westlake, Libby
Subject: E-Clips for 2/24/2017

HOUSE E-CLIPS

2/24/2017



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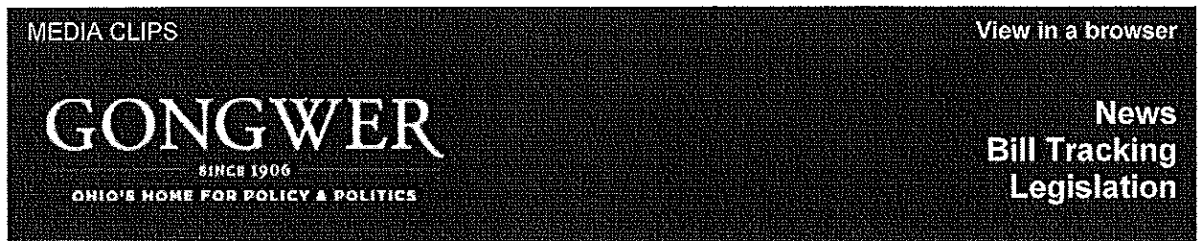
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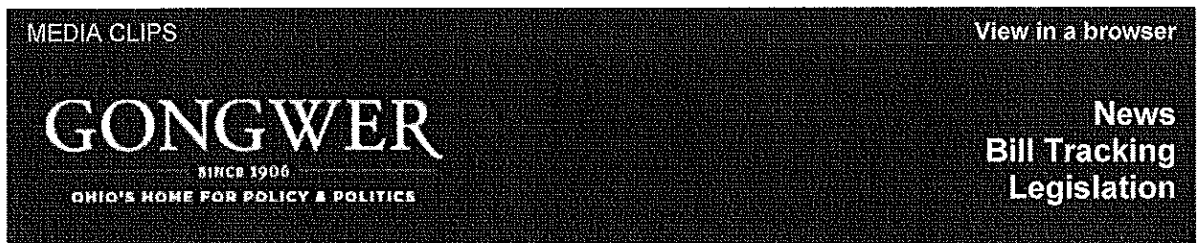
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Ohio bill outlawing marital rape gets no GOP support, again (Akron Beacon Journal, 2/27/2017)

After bitter feud, Kasich and Trump try to mend fences (Cincinnati Enquirer, 2/27/2017)

Kasich budget assumes Cincinnati could raise more taxes (Cincinnati Enquirer, 2/27/2017)

Kasich to GOP: Full Obamacare repeal 'not acceptable' (Cincinnati Enquirer, 2/27/2017)

Portman denies keeping Democrats out of political event (Cincinnati Enquirer, 2/27/2017)

Gov. John Kasich and Rep. Jim Jordan duel on TV over Obamacare repeal (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 2/27/2017)

Gov. John Kasich talks with President Trump about reforming Obamacare (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 2/27/2017)

Ohio congress members seek investigation of Jewish community center bomb threats (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 2/27/2017)

Tom Gunlock, former state school board president, leaves board (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 2/27/2017)

Capitol Insider: Kasich can relate to Trump's kerfuffles (Columbus Dispatch, 2/27/2017)

Grass-roots foes of Trump, GOP make noise in Ohio (Columbus Dispatch, 2/27/2017)

Kasich says town hall protests might be getting through to Capitol Hill (Columbus Dispatch, 2/27/2017)

Kasich, GOP at odds over Medicaid coverage (Columbus Dispatch, 2/27/2017)

Ohio may pay counties to take inmates off its hands (Columbus Dispatch, 2/27/2017)

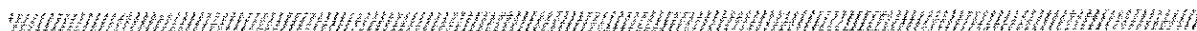
Trump has many believers in small-town Ohio (Columbus Dispatch, 2/27/2017)

Kasich fights for federal health care funds (Dayton Daily News, 2/27/2017)

Local governments told to 'open books' (Toledo Blade, 2/27/2017)

Ohio officers tasked with keeping race, gender data (Toledo Blade, 2/27/2017)

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A better death penalty for Ohio (Akron Beacon Journal, 2/27/2017)

Bickering over Gov. Kasich's traveling State of the State passes for political discourse in Ohio: Thomas Suddes (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 2/27/2017)

Keep defending Ohio Medicaid expansion, Gov. Kasich: editorial (Cleveland Plain Dealer, 2/27/2017)

Editorial: Victims seek more court leverage (Columbus Dispatch, 2/27/2017)

Governor got this right (Toledo Blade, 2/27/2017)

Right-to-work law still totally wrong for Ohio (Youngstown Vindicator, 2/27/2017)

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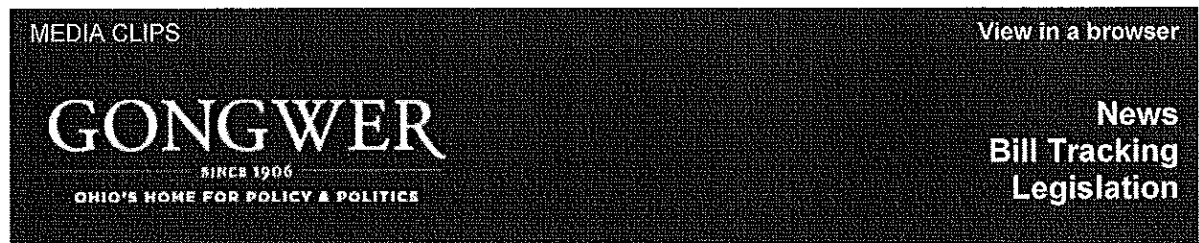
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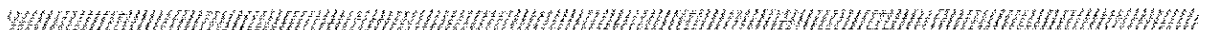
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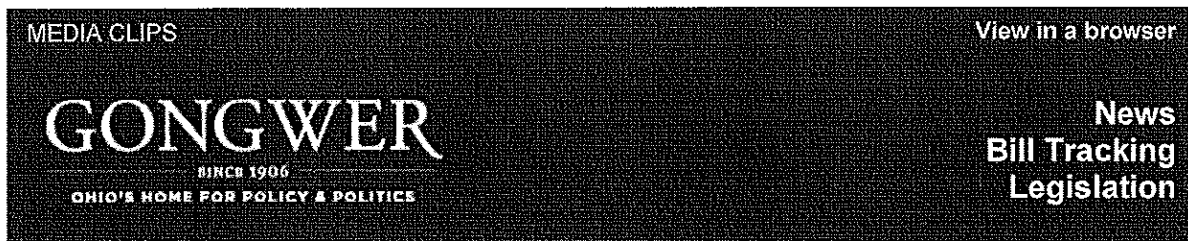
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Sent: Monday, February 27, 2017 8:31 AM
To: Kasych, Shawn
Subject: Ohio Media Clips, Monday, February 27



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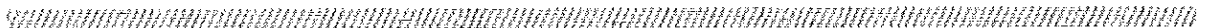
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OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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GOP Week in Review

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Sent: Wednesday, March 8, 2017 2:25 PM
To: Merrin, Derek; Kasych, Shawn; Myers, Marisa; Schuring, Kirk
CC: Zielinski, Justin; Wolf, Jimmy; Springhetti, Blake
Subject: RE: Please Review Draft - 15% Insurance

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Moreover, I am far from certain that lines 147-156 get you where you want to go on collective bargaining ("seek to obtain" is a far cry from obtaining).

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Sent: Wednesday, March 08, 2017 10:02 AM
To: Kasych, Shawn <Shawn.Kasych@ohiohouse.gov>; Myers, Marisa <marisa.myers@ohiohouse.gov>; Seitz, Bill <Bill.Seitz@ohiohouse.gov>; Schuring, Kirk <Kirk.Schuring@ohiohouse.gov>
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Thank you,
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From: Kasych, Shawn
Sent: Friday, March 17, 2017 6:30 PM
To: Merrin, Derek
CC: Rep30; Myers, Marisa; Schuring, Kirk; Zielinski, Justin; Wolf, Jimmy; Springhetti, Blake
Subject: Re: Please Review Draft 15% Insurance

What's the total savings of this proposal to the state?

Shawn Kasych
Majority Policy Director
614.466.0863

On Mar 17, 2017, at 4:48 PM, Merrin, Derek <Derek.Merrin@ohiohouse.gov> wrote:

Bill:

Thanks for the response. I do believe you are incorrect.

To verify, I've had LSC do additional research and complete a fiscal impact analysis.

Also, we've contacted Jason Parsons in the House for clarification.

Please see the attached LSC memo. I'll be moving forward with the bill next week.

I'll wait your co-sponsor support.

Enjoy the weekend,
Derek

<image001.jpg>

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<15% LSC Fiscal.pdf>

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CC: Rep30; Myers, Marisa; Schuring, Kirk; Zielinski, Justin; Wolf, Jimmy; Springhetti, Blake
Subject: RE: Please Review Draft 15% Insurance

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614.466.0863

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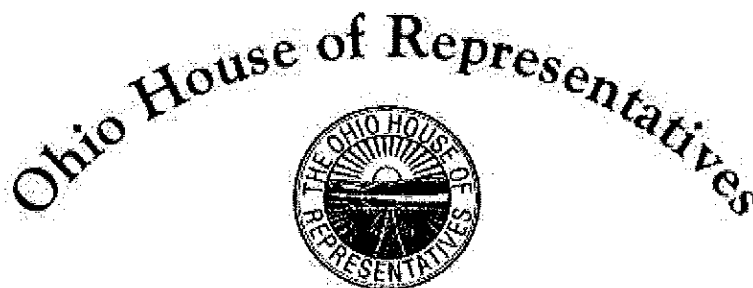
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From: Springhetti, Blake
Sent: Monday, March 20, 2017 11:35 AM
To: House_All
Subject: Co-Sponsor Request: Exempt State Employees Pay Portion of Dental, Vision, and Life
Attachments: Co-Sponsor Request - Requiring Exempt State Employees to Pay Healthcare Premiums.pdf



Representative Derek Merrin

47th District

MEMORANDUM

TO: All House Members

FROM: Representative Derek Merrin

DATE: March 20, 2017

RE: Co-Sponsor Request: Exempt State Employees Pay Portion of Dental, Vision, and Life Insurance Premiums

I will be introducing legislation that requires exempt state employees to pay a portion of their dental, vision, and life insurance premiums. Exempt state employees currently pay 15% of their premium for medical insurance – while paying 0% of the premium for dental, vision, and life insurance coverage. This legislation requires exempt state employees pay the same percentage for dental, vision, and life coverage as they pay for their medical insurance premium.

Key Facts:

- By having exempt state employees pay 15% of their dental, vision, and life premiums, taxpayers would save at least \$2.6 million annually.
- Legislation would impact about 16,400 exempt state employees.
- Legislation directs the state to seek the same provision when negotiating collective bargaining agreements that cover about 35,900 unionized state employees, which would save taxpayers an additional \$4.7 million annually.

If you would like to co-sponsor this legislation or have any questions, please contact my Legislative Aide, Blake Springhetti, at Blake.Springhetti@ohiohouse.gov or at (614) 466-1731 by **Tuesday, March 28 at 5:00 P.M.**

Sincerely,



Ohio House of Representatives



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Derek.Merrin@ohiohouse.gov
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614.466.0863

From: Rep30
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2017 8:27 AM
To: Kasych, Shawn <Shawn.Kasych@ohiohouse.gov>
Subject: RE: Please Review Draft 15% Insurance

Shawn—the LSC analysis he provided does NOT address the information I got (verbally) that the dental/vision cost is ALREADY rolled into the medical insurance premiums we pay! Can't Kim Flasher/DAS sort this out?

From: Kasych, Shawn
Sent: Sunday, March 19, 2017 12:50 PM
To: Merrin, Derek <Derek.Merrin@ohiohouse.gov>
Cc: Rep30 <Rep30@ohiohouse.gov>; Myers, Marisa <marisa.myers@ohiohouse.gov>; Schuring, Kirk <Kirk.Schuring@ohiohouse.gov>; Zielinski, Justin <Justin.Zielinski@ohiohouse.gov>; Wolf, Jimmy <Jimmy.Wolf@ohiohouse.gov>; Springhetti, Blake <Blake.Springhetti@ohiohouse.gov>
Subject: Re: Please Review Draft 15% Insurance

Thanks Representative.

Shawn Kasych
Majority Policy Director
614.466.0863

On Mar 19, 2017, at 12:19 PM, Merrin, Derek <Derek.Merrin@ohiohouse.gov> wrote:

Shawn:

For exempt employees, it'd save about \$2.6 million annually, which is the number I'm focused on.

That's what we can immediately save and do legislatively.

If the state was able to negotiate similar provision in collective bargaining agreements with state employees, it would save an additional \$4.7 million annually.

Total savings would potentially be \$7.3 million annually. With insurance likely increasing, the savings would grow as well.

Also, I will be submitting my bill as a budget amendment.

All the best,
Derek
<image001.jpg>

From: Kasych, Shawn
Sent: Friday, March 17, 2017 6:30 PM
To: Merrin, Derek <Derek.Merrin@ohiohouse.gov>
Cc: Rep30 <Rep30@ohiohouse.gov>; Myers, Marisa <marisa.myers@ohiohouse.gov>; Schuring, Kirk <Kirk.Schuring@ohiohouse.gov>; Zielinski, Justin <Justin.Zielinski@ohiohouse.gov>; Wolf, Jimmy <Jimmy.Wolf@ohiohouse.gov>; Springhetti, Blake <Blake.Springhetti@ohiohouse.gov>
Subject: Re: Please Review Draft 15% Insurance

What's the total savings of this proposal to the state?

Shawn Kasych
Majority Policy Director
614.466.0863

On Mar 17, 2017, at 4:48 PM, Merrin, Derek
<Derek.Merrin@ohiohouse.gov> wrote:

Bill:

Thanks for the response. I do believe you are incorrect.

To verify, I've had LSC do additional research and complete a fiscal impact analysis.

Also, we've contacted Jason Parsons in the House for clarification.

Please see the attached LSC memo. I'll be moving forward with the bill next week.

I'll wait your co-sponsor support.

Enjoy the weekend,
Derek

<image001.jpg>

From: Rep30

Sent: Wednesday, March 08, 2017 2:25 PM

To: Merrin, Derek <Derek.Merrin@ohiohouse.gov>; Kasych, Shawn <Shawn.Kasych@ohiohouse.gov>; Myers, Marisa <marisa.myers@ohiohouse.gov>; Schuring, Kirk <Kirk.Schuring@ohiohouse.gov>

Cc: Zielinski, Justin <Justin.Zielinski@ohiohouse.gov>; Wolf, Jimmy <Jimmy.Wolf@ohiohouse.gov>; Springhetti, Blake <Blake.Springhetti@ohiohouse.gov>

Subject: RE: Please Review Draft - 15% Insurance

Derek,

Since we talked on this, someone in a position to know (and I forget who it was) explained to me that the dental vision and life premiums are already built into the medical insurance premium we already pay as state legislators under the state plan. If so (and that can easily be confirmed either with Kim Flasher in the House or with DAS), your bill would have us pay twice for the same coverage. As you

know, I wasn't for this idea in the first place, but this would be another reason to oppose.

Moreover, I am far from certain that lines 147-156 get you where you want to go on collective bargaining ("seek to obtain" is a far cry from obtaining).

From: Merrin, Derek

Sent: Wednesday, March 08, 2017 10:02 AM

To: Kasych, Shawn <Shawn.Kasych@ohiohouse.gov>; Myers, Marisa <marisa.myers@ohiohouse.gov>; Seitz, Bill <Bill.Seitz@ohiohouse.gov>; Schuring, Kirk <Kirk.Schuring@ohiohouse.gov>

Cc: Zielinski, Justin <Justin.Zielinski@ohiohouse.gov>; Wolf, Jimmy <Jimmy.Wolf@ohiohouse.gov>; Springhetti, Blake <Blake.Springhetti@ohiohouse.gov>

Subject: Please Review Draft - 15% Insurance

Kirt, Bill, Marissa, and Shawn:

I've attached draft legislation that would require state employees, not covered by CBA, to pay the same % of their premium for dental, vision, and life insurance that they pay for medical insurance.

This would have employees effectively paying 15% of the premium for all insurance (medical, dental, vision, life). Employees currently pay 15% only for medical insurance.

Also, language is contained that would instruct the state to bargain to have the same provision included in CBA's that cover union, state employees.

Although I've discussed this issue with you already, I'd appreciate it if you would review the language and let me know if you have any suggestions or concerns.

Thank you,
Derek Merrin

<image001.jpg>

<15% LSC Fiscal.pdf>

From: Springhetti, Blake
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2017 11:18 AM
To: House_All
Subject: Reminder: Co-Sponsor Request: Exempt State Employees Pay Portion of Dental, Vision, and Life
Attachments: Co-Sponsor Request - Requiring Exempt State Employees to Pay Healthcare Premiums.pdf

**Reminder: The deadline to co-sponsor is
tomorrow at 5pm**



Representative Derek Merrin

47th District

MEMORANDUM

TO: All House Members

FROM: Representative Derek Merrin

DATE: March 20, 2017

RE: Co-Sponsor Request: Exempt State Employees Pay Portion of Dental,
Vision, and Life
Insurance Premiums

I will be introducing legislation that requires exempt state employees to pay a portion of their dental, vision, and life insurance premiums. Exempt state employees currently pay 15% of their premium for medical insurance – while paying 0% of the premium for dental, vision, and life insurance coverage. This legislation requires exempt state employees pay the same percentage for dental, vision, and life coverage as they pay for their medical insurance premium.

Key Facts:

- By having exempt state employees pay 15% of their dental, vision, and life premiums, taxpayers would save at least \$2.6 million annually.
- Legislation would impact about 16,400 exempt state employees.
- Legislation directs the state to seek the same provision when negotiating collective bargaining agreements that cover about 35,900 unionized state employees, which would save taxpayers an additional \$4.7 million annually.

If you would like to co-sponsor this legislation or have any questions, please contact my Legislative Aide, Blake Springhetti, at Blake.Springhetti@ohiohouse.gov or at (614) 466-1731 by Tuesday, March 28 at 5:00 P.M.

Sincerely,



Ohio House of Representatives



Representative Derek Merrin

47th District

MEMORANDUM

TO: All House Members

FROM: Representative Derek Merrin

DATE: March 20, 2017

RE: Co-Sponsor Request: Exempt State Employees Pay Portion of Dental, Vision, and Life Insurance Premiums

I will be introducing legislation that requires exempt state employees to pay a portion of their dental, vision, and life insurance premiums. Exempt state employees currently pay 15% of their premium for medical insurance – while paying 0% of the premium for dental, vision, and life insurance coverage. This legislation requires exempt state employees pay the same percentage for dental, vision, and life coverage as they pay for their medical insurance premium.

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- Legislation directs the state to seek the same provision when negotiating collective bargaining agreements that cover about 35,900 unionized state employees, which would save taxpayers an additional \$4.7 million annually.

If you would like to co-sponsor this legislation or have any questions, please contact my Legislative Aide, Blake Springhetti, at Blake.Springhetti@ohiohouse.gov or at (614) 466-1731 by **Tuesday, March 28 at 5:00 P.M.**

Sincerely,



Derek Merrin
Ohio House of Representatives
House District 47
Office (614) 466-1731
Derek.Merrin@ohiohouse.gov
77 S. High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

From: report@hannah.com
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2017 6:51 PM
To: DL Hannah
Subject: Hannah News Stories for Monday, March 27, 2017

Monday, March 27, 2017

IN TODAY'S HANNAH REPORT:

Please click here to read the entire Hannah Report.

Today's Stories

- [Conference Committee Approves Transportation Budget with 4-2 Vote](#)
- [Poll Finds 2016 Ideological Divisions Remain among Ohio Voters](#)
- [Kasich Addresses AHCA Withdrawal on CNN Sunday, Calls Divisiveness 'Pathetic'](#)
- [Controlling Board Approves Agenda with Rare Lack of Holds from Legislators](#)
- [JCARR Hears Rules Changes on Shaving, Hunting, Case Management, Casinos](#)
- [Shale Gas Production Ends Three-Year Climb](#)
- [Kasich Administration Announces \\$4.3 million in New Tax Credits](#)
- [OSU Touts New Hydrogen Fuel Cell Bus](#)
- [Stateline: Lawmakers Look to Curb Foreign Influence in State Elections](#)
- [State Government Roundup: ECOT](#)
- [Campaign Corner: Ohio GOP](#)
- [Ohio Digest: Buckeye Institute](#)
- [Campus Chronicle: Lanzinger Papers](#)
- [Judicial Actions: Commercial Dockets](#)
- [Legislative Schedule Changes](#)

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From: Utility Dive
Sent: Tuesday, April 11, 2017 9:24 AM
To: Kasych, Shawn
Subject: Free Stanford Webinar: Unlocking your creativity.

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Stanford | Center for
Professional Development

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Free Stanford Webinar

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Cultivate Your Creativity

Have you ever thought to yourself 'I am not creative'? In this webinar, you'll learn to debunk the notion that creativity is a special talent assigned to others. You'll learn to train yourself to behave creatively, thus unlocking your own ability to solve problems.

Join Stanford's William Burnett, Executive Director of the Design Program at Stanford, as he describes design thinking principles – and actionable methods - that you can put to work immediately, so that you think out of the box, frame problems differently, and generate innovative solutions at your company.

You will learn how:

- ✓ Creative people view the world
- ✓ You can train yourself to be more creative
- ✓ You and your company can generate new ideas

This webinar series will give you a taste of what will be taught during the Innovation Masters Series - Design Thinking and the Art of Innovation course being held June 21-23rd , 2017 at Stanford University.

Register Now

Presented by the Innovation Masters Series - Design Thinking and the Art of Innovation.

Questions? Contact 650-204-3984 or scpd-design@lists.stanford.edu.

Date: April 19, 2017
Day: Wednesday
Time: 10am-11am PDT

Venue:
Online via Webex
= A

Registration:
learn.stanford.edu/cultivate-creativity-webinar-registration.html

Upcoming Events

Enrollment opens for summer graduate courses
= A
April 9, 2017

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From: Rep30

Sent: Wednesday, April 12, 2017 7:51 AM

To: Rep84; Rep88; Rep82; Cliff Hite (LIO); Beagle@ohiosenate.gov; Balderson@ohiosenate.gov; Frank Strigari; Lehman, Ryan; Kasych, Shawn

CC: Dumski, Allie; Benjamin, Abigail; Leach, Eric; Emilie Regula; Ethan Zucal; Rachael Mains

Subject: FW: Wind News - Ohio Setbacks in Play

Attachments: mime-attachment.jpg; mime-attachment.jpg; mime-attachment.jpg; mime-attachment.jpg; mime-attachment.png; mime-attachment.jpg; mime-attachment.jpg; mime-attachment.jpg

Please read every word of this long chain. There is no way on God's Green Earth that we should even consider for a millisecond changing the wind setbacks in the budget. Any of you that want to discuss this topic, I am game but not in the budget and the ardor to change them should be tempered by what you read below.

From: Kevon Martis <kevon@kevonmartis.com>

Date: April 11, 2017 at 9:04:53 PM EDT

To: julia johnson <juliejohnson@ctcn.net>, "Seitz, William" <william.seitz@dinsmore.com>

Subject: Re: Wind News - Ohio Setbacks in Play

A "flier"???? IT's from the f***** Michigan State University Extension, Greening Michigan Institute, Government and Public Policy Team!!!! That's the best they have?

MSE extension educates every planning commissioner in the State of Michigan!

Sorry...tired.

On 4/11/2017 8:52 PM, julia johnson wrote:

Friends,

We regret that a series of computer malfunctions left us out of communication over the past two weeks. During that time the wind industry lobby has been working to get the Ohio Senate to insert a provision in the budget bill rolling back the current property line setback. At the same

time, Rep. Bill Seitz has suggested that some kind of compromise on setbacks may need to be inserted in the mandate repeal bill (HB 114) when it is considered in the Senate. Seitz tells us that might be the cost of getting a veto-proof majority of Senate votes necessary to override a veto by Governor Kasich. As we understand it, a setback-related amendment to HB 114 would give township trustees the power to override current setbacks. When asked about conflicts of interest, Rep. Seitz said, *"Under my proposal, the trustees could not vote if they were participating leaseholders. My guess is that letting the trustees override the state setbacks would not result in much change as the people in the township would likely pressure them to not approve it."* What we do not know at this point is whether the township trustees would be given the opportunity to lengthen setbacks as well as shorten them.

AWEA and the environmentalists are working hard to reverse protective setbacks. What we hope does not happen, is that the current setbacks are changed AND the township trustees are given authority to put them back only to preexisting property line measurements. There seems to be no dialog on noise or shadow flicker just distance.

In the meantime, during the past two weeks the press has reported setback controversies in Michigan, South Dakota, Rhode Island, Minnesota and Colorado. And those are just the stories we noticed.

We also draw your attention to the LeedCo Icebreaker project (aka taxpayer boondoggle) in Lake Erie. The OPSB did not accept the application as complete and has requested the LeedCo resubmit. Today the American Bird Conservancy wrote in the Chicago Tribune that all turbines should be kept out of the Great Lakes due to enormous projections of migratory slaughter. We understand that many, many people wrote comments in opposition to the LeedCo project. Now that the application must be submitted, we are told all those comments will be lost and the public will have to start over.

We are glad to be back on line and urge everyone to call their local legislators to counter the spin coming from AWEA. Cut and paste the articles about problems in other states to demonstrate these problems are real.

Diane and Julie

PS We include at the very bottom a profile of first term Ohio Rep. Craig Riedel from Defiance.

Ohio Statehouse News

April 11, 2017 OHIO

Wind, Environmental Groups Eyeing Senate For Budget Amendment To Reduce Wind Setback

A coalition of wind energy advocates is laying the groundwork for a budget effort to reduce Ohio's turbine setback once the two-year spending measure arrives in the Senate.

Advocates said in interviews they believe senators are more amenable to their proposal to revert the setback to what it was before lawmakers increased it to 1,125 feet in a 2014 mid-biennium review budget bill, effectively killing new wind farm development.

At the same time, members of both House caucuses submitted proposed budget amendments last week offering several options to reduce the current setback.

A proposal from Rep. Bill Reineke (R-Tiffin), for instance, would reduce the setback to one-and-a-half times the height of the turbine. Although not as lenient as the pre-2014 setback, he believes it's a "good compromise" between the two sides.

"Wind is a big resource in my district and I've had a lot of requests for those setbacks to be looked at," Rep. Reineke said. "It increases it slightly over what it was pre-2014. And it changes some of the hearing requirements for the neighbors to be able to sign off if they would choose to do so. It gives it a little bit more flexibility."

Rep. Reineke said he believes there's an appetite in the House to reexamine the issue.

Whether any of those amendments will make it into the House's substitute budget (HB 49) bill expected to be unveiled April 25 is yet to be seen. But even if the House chooses to pass on the issue, advocates believe the Senate may be more willing to act.

"I certainly think there's a possibility of it (happening)," said Dayna Baird Payne, who represents the American Wind Energy Association and other proponents. "I think there is some openness in the Senate currently."

She credits much of that openness to Sen. Cliff Hite (R-Findlay), whose district would likely contain any new wind development. But advocates say the Senate overall has greater institutional knowledge of the issue and offers an easier route to generate a consensus given its smaller size.

"I think there's some understanding on that leadership team this is an issue about economic development and removing an artificial market barrier," Ms. Payne said. "If a company wants to build a wind project, locals want that project and an end user wants to purchase that wind, this stands in the way and prevents it."

The Sierra Club and the Ohio Environmental Council are among other groups hoping for a setback change in the Senate. At the same time, they continue pushing back against a Michigan State University document some Republican representatives have said justifies an additional increase in the setback.

Rep. Keith Faber (R-Celina) and Rep. Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati) have repeatedly pointed to the document in recent weeks, saying that if the legislature really wants to take the issue back up it should increase the setback to 2,500 feet.

Wind supporters, though, point out that what the lawmakers have called a "study" is referred to as a "flier" by its author and that it states a setback equal to the tower's height would be adequate. Under that rationale, they said, the state's previous setback would suffice.

"We're watching this issue," OEC General Counsel Trent Dougherty said. "Obviously, we don't believe there should be even more of an increase...so we're watching for that and expressing our opposition."

Sierra Club Ohio Chapter Director Jen Miller called the idea "ridiculous," since turbine development has already come to a virtual halt under the current setback.

"Eighty percent of wind in Ohio is actually serving markets outside of Ohio," Ms. Miller said. "We should just be fixing our problem now. We've already zoned ourselves out of the wind business."

<http://www.marion-press.com/2017/03/wind-turbines-unsafe-at-any-distance/>

The Marion Press - MICHIGAN

Tuesday, April 11, 2017

"Wind Turbines: Unsafe at any distance"



Dear Editor:

Last December, one of the turbines at the Stoney Corners wind facility burst into flames and was completely destroyed. Black smoke darkened the sky and heavy winds spread ash and burning particles on fields and properties nearby. For days the acrid odor of smoldering composites lingered in the air and seeped into my home along with several other homes in the area of the fire.

By the next day, what was left of the turbine was hauled off and some of the contaminated top soil was bulldozed into a

pile where it still sits, three months later. What assurance is there that contaminants from the burned turbine are not filtering into the groundwater below?

Heritage Sustainable Energy, who owns the project, told the local press that turbine fires have never happened before in McBain. That may be so, but as a wind developer, Heritage is well aware that fire is the second largest cause of turbine failure worldwide and the problem is growing. Heritage touts wind power as clean and emission free but no one ever mentions the toxic pollutants released when the blades and other parts of the nacelle are ignited or the hazards of inhaling the gas and particles emitted by the fire.

‡ More than ten of the 28 Heritage turbines are sited within two miles of my home with the closest just 1700 feet away." Back in 2008 when I agreed to sign a contract with Heritage, something I deeply regret, no one informed me of the dangers of living so close to the spinning towers. I can tell you first hand that wind turbines are not safe for humans, animals, birds of all sorts, the environment, or your electric bill. They are Not Green, Not Clean and Not Cheap.

If the state and its legislators continue to blindly insist that wind turbines are safe, they should advocate projects be sited on State and Federal land away from communities where they pollute our countryside and put people and property at risk.

There are alternatives to wind power that do not carry the same dangers and that are safer for humans, animals, birds and our countryside. Be warned and say "no" to wind power in your community.

Dianne Ziegler

<http://www.faribaultcountyregister.com/page/content.detail/id/512142/Fighting-the-winds-of-change.html>

Fighting the winds of change

Pilot Grove Township residents want stricter wind ordinance

April 9, 2017

Cody Benjamin - Register Staff Writer Faribault County Register **MINNESOTA**

When the Coalition for Rural Property Rights stormed the Faribault County Courthouse on Tuesday, it was not an officially licensed organization.

But in claiming support from nearly 90 percent of Pilot Grove Township residents, overflowing the county commissioners room with agricultural advocates and literally standing in unison to plead for greater setbacks and a more restrictive ordinance pertaining to wind turbines in the county, it made its stance as official as could be.

The Coalition brands itself as "a group of Iowa landowners standing against the encroachment of industrial wind installations," but its representatives at Tuesday's meeting mostly identified themselves as Pilot Grove residents particularly ones perturbed at a Rose Lake Wind Project proposed by the independent power producer EDF Renewable Energy.

The Faribault County Board meeting room was overflowing last Tuesday, when residents of Pilot Grove Township and others testified before the commissioners about their concerns about wind turbine development.

With at least four locals reading prepared statements, several others chiming in from behind walls of other guests and the County Board forced to oversee crowded seating arrangements as much as the discussion at hand, the Coalition prefaced a visit from EDF's Shanelle Montana, a senior project developer, with adamant requests for a crackdown on turbines.

Not one of the guest speakers denied the financial benefit of wind generation, which Montana went on to crown as "an additional resource" for "cheap electricity" and therefore an obvious draw for local businesses. But

complaints of everything from noisy turbine malfunctions to an alleged ignorance of the county's agricultural roots rang loud and clear as the Coalition suggested the commissioners adopt the Goodhue County wind-structure ordinance, which enforces greater setbacks than that of Faribault County's renewable energy restrictions.

Paul Carr, who said he has mostly been a lifelong Pilot Grove Township resident, helped kick off the campaign. "I come here," Carr said, "representing and on behalf of about 88 percent of Pilot Grove Township residents, who have signed a petition to increase a setback of commercial wind generators to non-participating residences."

Saying that current setbacks, which dictate that wind turbines can be placed roughly 1,000 to 1,500 feet from such residences, are "not far enough to prevent material harm" such as added noise, shadow flicker and "a complete change of environment," Carr asked that local constituents be prioritized over the economic boosts of projects like the one proposed by EDF.

Montana later countered by suggesting the EDF project, which would span from Pilot Grove Township into Martin County, would not begin taking shape until 2020. By that point, such a project would not be federally subsidized, therefore potentially lessening the financial burden on local communities.

But concerns remained.

"Most object to an object roughly the size of a Boeing 747, over 400 feet in the air and constantly moving, being placed within 1,000 to roughly 1,500 feet of them," Carr said. "Without more setbacks for large wind turbines, the county may find itself with more money to spend on a public garage (only) to serve its fewer residents."

Carolyn Zierke, a local agronomist of 25 years, wondered aloud why counties, especially Faribault County, would even consider uprooting or impeding upon signature farmlands for the sake of wind projects.

"Why are counties overlaying an industrial zone on top of a productive agricultural zone?" she asked. "A turbine is not a piece of farm equipment, and it is not a farm structure."

Dan Moore, once a director of project development for Renewable Energy Solutions and one of the developers behind Blue Earth's Big Blue Windfarm, agreed.

"I sat here in this same seat 14 years ago," Moore said, referencing a decades-old visit to the County Board regarding turbine development. "Today, I am here as a retired wind generator developer ... and I am asking for the adoption of the Goodhue County ordinance."

Reviewing his own history in campaigning for wind energy, Moore reminded the board that he helped other turbines, including those at Winnebago's Corn Plus ethanol plant, come to life.

But after discovering some of the faults of turbine projects, particularly noisy side effects, he made it clear Tuesday that he was standing with none other than the waves of Pilot Grove people behind him.

"Had I known they would be this noisy, guys," he said, referring to the Big Blue turbines, "listen, I would never have started developing that project."

Producing an apple from his shirt pocket and leaving it on the guest podium in front of the commissioners, Moore asked the board to overlook promises of more money for the concerns of the rural residents.

"Don't get mesmerized by the apple money," he said.

"Don't let the illusion of big money generated by these big machines cloud your judgment in protecting the residents who are forced to live around these big machines. These are the families that have elected you guys to protect them, so please don't bite the apple."

Others reiterated the alluring, albeit apparently deceiving, role of money in the matter.

"In the end, it seems like the money always wins," one man said from the mass of guests, saying the county already houses 22 industrial-sized turbines. "EDF is on the agenda

after us, and I'm sure they're going to tell you how great this is, how every project they've built has left counties rich and happy, because that's what this big push for wind is all about money."

When Montana, of EDF, was finally summoned to speak, weaving through the crowd of standing guests to make herself seen, she did not ignore money's part in the discussion.

But her first point centered on the fact that EDF will not pursue any project, let alone one that allegedly threatens the well-being of nearly an entire township, without the community's support.

"I'm not here to shove a project down anyone's throat," Montana said, recounting her own upbringing as a "farm girl." "I'm just here to present something. We're only here if we have a willing partner, and that partner is a community."

Claiming that the state of Minnesota already owns some of the strictest wind turbine setbacks in the country, Montana assured some of the concerned residents that if any malfunctioning or noisy structures reached certain decibel levels, they would be shut down.

"A decommissioning plan is required with these projects," she noted.

All things considered, Montana still urged the commissioners to weigh their options. "This is up to the community," she said. "I just want you to know that if you have an additional setback, I cannot efficiently and effectively develop a low-cost project."

Pilot Grove visitors flocked to the EDF developer after departing the commissioners room, some alleging that a February public meeting on the proposed turbine project was available through "private invitation only," and others saying they heard EDF partners are contracted not to speak negatively about polarizing projects.

But more talks regarding the future of the project, and the ordinance that might inhibit it, are on the docket.

Commissioner Greg Young, who acknowledged most of the concerns stemmed from a township he represents, agreed with board chairman John Roper that a work session with the county's Planning and Zoning department was in order. A unanimous vote by the commissioners then scheduled that session for April 18, immediately following the board's next regular meeting.

And now, having shared or considered opinions from both sides of a windy spectrum, the county, Montana and the Coalition for Rural Property Rights wait.

http://www.starbeacon.com/news/local_news/conneaut-wind-turbine-facing-uncertain-future/article_2ca4767c-b0e9-5bd2-9215-22d8377023fc.html

Conneaut wind turbine facing uncertain future

By MARK TODD OHIO



WARREN DILLAWAY | Star Beacon

An arm of a Conneaut Harbor wind turbine was severed by lightning last month.

CONNEAUT — A wind turbine severely damaged by lightning late last month is facing an uncertain future on Conneaut's lakefront.

At Monday's City Council meeting, City Manager James Hockaday said the turbine's owner, NexGen Energy, wants a long-term renewal of its contract with the city before it will proceed with repairs.

The 400-kilowatt turbine was constructed in January 2010 to provide some of the electricity used by the city's sewage treatment plant. On Feb. 25, lightning blew apart one of the turbine's blades. A power surge from the blast also damaged some equipment and fixtures inside the plant.

A contract with NexGen obliges the city to buy electricity generated by the turbine for 10 years. The contract expires in 2020.

Hockaday said NexGen estimates repairs to the turbine will cost \$250,000. To make the fix-up financially feasible for NexGen, the company would require an extension to its contract with the city, he told council.

A contract proposal is being prepared and will be shared with council when it's delivered, Hockaday said. If no agreement on a contract extension is reached, the city would ask the turbine be disassembled and removed.

NexGen said the damage to the turbine was among the most severe the company has experienced, Hockaday said Monday. The extent of damage to the plant is still being assessed, he said.

The biggest concern is a blower motor on one piece of equipment that is not working properly.

In August 2011, 18 months after the turbine was installed, lightning damaged a blade that was replaced several months later.

A NexGen spokesperson could not be reached for comment.

Another NexGen wind turbine, a 600-kilowatt model adjacent to Conneaut Middle School on Gateway Avenue, has been idle for years. NexGen is suing the manufacturer, alleging parts were defective. The turbine, designed to

provide electricity to CMS, never performed as planned since it went online in late 2009, according to the lawsuit, filed in 2013.

Repairs to the school turbine won't happen until the lawsuit is settled, NexGen officials said at the time.

<http://gazette.com/reassurances-fail-to-convince-some-neighbors-el-paso-county-wind-farm-is-safe/article/1599581>

Reassurances fail to convince some neighbors El Paso County wind farm is safe

By: Rachel Riley

March 23, 2017 Updated: March 24, 2017 at 6:21 am **COLORADO**

Residents living by a wind farm near Calhan say the turbines are affecting their health and harming animals, despite reassurances from experts at this week's El Paso County commissioners' meeting.

Jeff Wolfe, who lives close to NextEra Energy's Golden West wind farm, said he's experienced nausea, dizziness and migraines since it began operating in fall 2015. He attributes the symptoms to the low-frequency sound waves, known as infrasound, emitted by the 145 windmills.

"This is poisoning people. It's poisoning animals," said Wolfe, who has lived at his home between Yoder and Calhan for 20 years. He also blames the turbines for the cardiovascular problems his wife has begun to experience and the death of seven of their animals, including five dogs.

At the meeting, intended to provide commissioners and residents with an update on the wind farm, county staff and NextEra officials presented reports on the sound levels of the windmills and the flickering effect, known as "shadow flicker," that occurs when the sun shines through the turbines' rotating blades. A half-dozen residents also had the chance to air their grievances about the wind farm,

approved by commissioners in 2013, which has long been a source of controversy.

Experts told commissioners that study after study has shown the infrasound generated by windmills isn't hazardous to humans, and the levels of infrasound and amount of shadow flicker created by the turbines are in compliance with local regulations and zoning rules.

John Dailey, senior business manager for the Florida-based energy company, said the company has received 83 complaints about the project since March 2015, a month after commissioners OK'd a change to the original construction plan that included a 29-mile above-ground power line.

About 70 of the complaints were made during the seven months the farm was being built and mostly involved construction-related concerns about noise and dust. Of the roughly 15 others that have been made since the \$400 million project was completed, more than half have been resolved, Dailey said.

"I think that's a pretty good track record," he told commissioners.

Assessor Steve Schleiker also presented data from June through January showing property values in the area have not fallen due to the wind farm. Properties sold within a one-mile radius of the turbines and transmission line went for prices well above market values. He also cited numbers from the Pikes Peak Multiple Listing Service that showed that average sale prices of single family homes in the Calhan and Ramah area increased by about 45.5 percent between February 2016 and February 2017.

"Bottom line, it's all good news," he told commissioners.

A consultant with environmental engineering and consulting firm Epsilon Associates, hired by NextEra to conduct studies on sound levels and shadow flicker that were required by its agreement with the county, presented the firm's findings.

One report, which measured noise levels at 15 different locations near the wind farm, concluded that the turbines do not exceed the noise limit set by county ordinance. The second report, which used a computerized model to measure the duration of shadow flicker experienced by homes near the farm, stated that most of the homes experience less than the 30-hour-per-year maximum imposed by county regulations. The two exceptions were homes that are not included in the requirement because their owners have voluntary agreements with the company.

While research has linked high levels of infrasound to symptoms such as headache and nausea, the levels created by the turbines are too low to pose health risks, said Chris Ollson, an environmental health scientist who spoke at the meeting.

But residents who testified during the public comment part of the meeting dismissed the data, saying the infrasound and shadow flicker are still taking a toll.

"It's changed our life dramatically," said Joe Cobb, who lives close to the wind farm. "And I don't care how many experts come up here and tell me it's perfectly normal. It's not perfectly normal."

Several of the complaints the company has yet to resolve were made by people who spoke at the meeting, said Steve Stengel, director of communications for NextEra. "We will continue to seek a satisfactory resolution with these individuals," Stengel said in an email following the meeting.

Commissioner Darryl Glenn said his colleagues and county staff would review residents' concerns and some of the research that was provided by objectors.

Glenn also encouraged residents to use the formal complaint process, outlined in NextEra's contract with the county, to express their concerns about the effects of the windmills.

Under the terms of the contract, commissioners have the option to "require additional and reasonable mitigation or

remedial actions" if NextEra does not adequately address complaints.

<http://www.krdo.com/news/top-stories/calhan-wind-farm-situation-remains-unresolved/411990993>

Calhan wind farm situation remains unresolved

Nextera says turbines are within safety guidelines

By: Scott Harrison

Posted: Mar 23, 2017 06:38 PM MDT **COLORADO**

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. - An El Paso County commissioner said Thursday that safety and health concerns regarding the Nextera wind farm in Calhan may never be resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

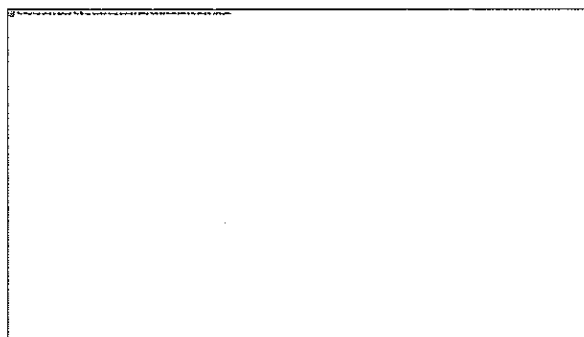
"I don't know that it's within our authority to consider at this point in time," said Commissioner Mark Waller. "It's been approved. The process has already taken place to allow Nextera to operate a wind farm."

Ever since the wind farm opened last fall, a small but vocal group of current and former neighbors has expressed concern that noise, other types of sound called infrasound and shadow flicker from turbine blades have sickened people and animals.

"I had to move away because I was sick," said Jeff Wolfe. "My wife stays behind to care for our animals and she's getting sick. I put my life savings into our home."

Wolfe said 10 to 15 families have moved away from Calhan because of the situation.

Commissioners on Thursday held a hearing on the matter that lasted nearly four hours.

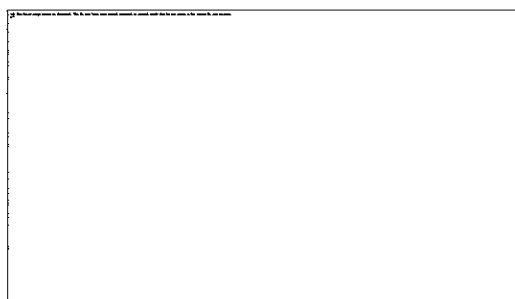


John Dailey, a Nextera spokesman, declined an interview request from KRDO NewsChannel 13 to explain what else besides the wind farm could be affecting health.

But in a presentation during the hearing, Dailey cited Nextera studies, and research from two consultants, which state the wind farm is well within the health and safety guidelines established in the company's permit from the county.

"Generally speaking, (any) complaints (or) impacts have been attributed to infrasound, which is a form of noise," he said. "We've received complaints of that nature from four or five individuals -- some of them, multiple times."

Several Nextera critics said they conducted their own research, including a study by a Boulder-based acoustics expert who suggested the wind farm should close.



Commissioners said they don't have enough information yet to decide what, if any, action to take.

"We're going to hold Nextera accountable to make sure they're meeting their obligations," Waller said. "We're

trying to be unbiased about the situation. This is the first time we as a commission (with two new members) are learning about the history of the situation and the level of concern."

At an undetermined future hearing, commissioners said they want to learn more about how Nextera responds to complaints from neighbors.

Some neighbors said Nextera is slow to respond or hasn't responded at all, and criticized commissioners for their lack of action.

Commissioners Darryl Glenn and Longinos Gonzalez Jr., both asked upset neighbors to follow an established complaint process.

"It's extremely important because it's an obligation that we're held to," Glenn said. "We can't hold Nextera responsible for not doing what they're (supposed to) if the complaint hasn't been submitted (properly)."

Dailey said Nextera will work harder to communicate with affected neighbors, and that the company wants to see the results of the private research presented at the hearing.

The wind farm has 145 turbines and a 29-mile transmission line. The company sells electricity to Xcel Energy.

http://www.ricentral.com/coventry_courier/residents-complain-of-issues-with-turbines/article_32004724-1028-11e7-9df6-5762fa374322.html

Residents complain of issues with turbines

Kendra Lollo Mar 23, 2017 RHODE ISLAND

COVENTRY — Citing increasing concerns from constituents in her ward regarding Wind Energy Development's newly-installed wind turbines, Councilwoman Karen Carlson made a public plea this week with town officials to "take notice and listen."